

Testimony of Tom Swan, Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG)

Testimony before the Government Administration and Elections Committee

In support of HB 5389 AAC Public Financing For Judge of Probate Candidates

In support of SB 252 AAC Post-Election Audit Integrity and Efficiency

In opposition to SJ 33 Resolution Petitioning the United States Congress to Convene an Article V Constitutional Convention to Overturn the United States Supreme Court's Decision in Citizens United vs. Federal Election Commission

February 29, 2016

Senator Cassano, Representative Jutila and other members of the GAE Committee my name is Tom Swan. I am the Executive Director of the CT Citizen Action Group (CCAG). CCAG has been committed to building a more robust democracy for 45 years.

I want to start my testimony by voicing our support for HB 5389 AAC Public Financing For Judge of Probate Candidates. CCAG strongly supported the adoption of the Citizen Election Program for state offices and are very proud about the success of the program. We realize that the over reliance on contributions from people who do business before the courts can raise legitimate questions about fairness and about the integrity of the overall system. A study to evaluate options for probate candidates is a wise step.

CCAG also supports SB 522 AAC Post-Election Audit Integrity and Efficiency. Maintaining the public trust in our elections is paramount to a democracy. Problems with election administration in Connecticut are more common than any of us would like. To minimize the potential of poor administration or corrupt behavior overturning the voters' intention, we should tighten up the audit procedures as outlined in this legislation.

We applaud that this Committee wants to have the legislature be on the record opposing the Supreme Court's terrible activist decision in the Citizen United Vs FEC case. We oppose this decision as much as anyone else does, but worry that SJ 33 Resolution calling for an Article V Constitutional Convention is potentially like using a nuclear bomb to get rid of a mosquito. Right wing fringe groups like ALEC are calling for an Article V Convention to advance their flat earth agenda. The Connecticut legislature should not play into their hand by calling for a Convention that very likely could include issues that you do not intend. If you want to pass a resolution that will more likely result in overturning this horrendous decision we recommend you pass one calling for the US Senate to do their job regarding the opening on Supreme Court due to Justice Scalia's passing.

Thank you for your consideration.